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**ELISHA AND ELIJAH**

**Passing on:** commitment and handing over the reigns

**What a mentor does:** involves

**Scriptures to study:** 1 Kings 19:15-21, 2 Kings 2:1-14

**Key thoughts:**

* Elijah was an Old Testament prophet. Near the end of his life, Elijah was instructed by God to take on a mentee and successor, Elisha.
* The offer of mentorship showed Elisha his calling. He jumped at the opportunity to be with Elijah and was fully committed from day one.
* Elisha witnessed God’s power at work through his mentor Elijah. As he was about to take over as prophet, he asked Elijah for a double portion of his spirit.

**Commitment.** The first thing Elisha does when called to become his mentee is to immediately say “yes”. Scripture records, “So Elisha returned to his oxen and slaughtered them. He used the wood from the plow to build a fire to roast their flesh. He passed around the meat to the townspeople, and they all ate. Then he went with Elijah as his assistant" (1 Kings 19:2). Upon being instructed to become Elijah’s mentee, Elisha left his family and job, sold his business, and sent the proceeds to his village. His commitment was immediate and complete. His task was not to instantly become a prophet himself. Instead he was to follow, study and learn from Elijah by observing his life, habits, disciplines and relationships.

Elisha would spent approximately six years under the senior prophet’s teaching and example, until Elijah died. On the day Elijah was taken up into heaven, Elisha refused to leave his side. He remained committed to his mentor until the moment he was taken up. Elisha then picked up Elijah’s cloak and continued his work (2 Kings 2:11-14). Elijah left him his cloak as a symbol that it was now time for the younger man to fulfill the plans God had for him. Rather than rejoicing that his time had come, Elisha was crushed to see his mentor leave, proving that he wasn't serving Elijah just to propel his own future.

**Pursuit and handing off.** A mentor may believe it is his job to pursue the mentee, giving great effort to becoming an influence in his life. The opposite is true. Elisha’s role, and success, was found in his relentless pursuit of his mentor. Being under the tutelage of another can be difficult. At times we are asked to do hard things. Perhaps our perception of the mentor is challenged when we are introduced to the humanness of someone we greatly respect. But the reward is great for those protégés who press beyond these struggles until the day when the baton is clearly passed on to them.[[1]](#footnote-1)

“And when they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you.’ And Elisha said, ‘Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.’ He said, ‘You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.’ As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven. Elisha saw it and cried out, ‘My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!’ and he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of Jordan. He took the mantel of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, “where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?’ And when he also struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over” (2 Kings 2:6-14).

Elisha immediately took on Elijah’s role and responsibilities after he was taken up into heaven. Previously, Elijah had parted the waters of Jordan with his mantle, allowing the two to cross safely. After Elijah was taken to heaven, it was clear that Elisha must take over the same role. He did so and he too was able to part the waters of Jordan. This shows us that the mentor was able to instill their leadership ability into their mentee. In today’s world, mentors have to ask themselves: are we preparing people to become leaders or are we making them too dependent on us?

When mentors allow their mentees to become too dependent, those mentees will not know what to do when they are out on their own. This is not the purpose of the mentor. It is not to say, “I am so good that you can’t do anything without me.” Not only does this accomplish nothing, but it would have a very negative effect. Imagine if Elijah had been this way with Elisha. The results would have been detrimental when Elijah was taken up to heaven.[[2]](#footnote-2)



* What is something that you have taken over for someone else? Were you able to do it as well as they did based on their example? Did you do it differently and why?
* Do you think it is important to be dependent on other people and their expertise, or to learn as much as you can from them so that you have that knowledge for yourself?
* Do you know your purpose in life and work? What made that clear to you?
* Are you “following in the footsteps” of another leader or mentor? In what ways?



* Read 1 Kings 19:15-18. God appointed Elijah’s mentee. Do you believe this still happens today? How do you identify as a mentor or mentee and does God have a role in forming that relationship?
* Read 1 Kings 19:19-21. Elisha immediately left his field and became Elijah’s servant and mentee. Have you ever had the opportunity to connect with someone and jumped at the opportunity? Why or why not?
* Read 2 Kings 2:1-14. Elisha saw Elijah taken up into heaven and then immediately took over as prophet. What might this look like today? Would a mentee ever assume the role of the mentor?
* Why do you think it was important for Elisha to follow Elijah for a number of years and observe him as prophet? What are some of the things he may have learned during that time?



* If you don’t have a mentor-mentee relationship with anyone, ask God this week to be preparing that connection for you. Ask God to reveal a relationship where you might be a mentor or mentee. Be ready to answer the call when given.
* What can you prepare someone else to lead? How can you hand-off responsibility in an effective manner in time? Will this attitude of “handing off” change the way you lead?
* Is there value in you “following in the footsteps” of a mentor or other leader? Why or why not?

1. https://familyfire.com/articles/lessons-in-mentorship-elijah-and-elisha [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://templeofradiantlight.org/blog/the-power-of-mentorship-elijah-and-elisha/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)